Autumn and Leah

Outline of Project

Words through Music

Autumn has always been inspired by music and she firmly believes it can be a helpful motivator in the writing process. Leah has been a thriving fiction writer and wanted to explore the world of short or flash fiction. So, we decided to meld together the two favorites and see if we could create a helpful exercise for high school writers to use that was more interesting than just quiet freewriting time.

Materials:

* 5, 1 minute clips of sound or instrumental music
* Some way to play the music: mp3, cd, tape, etc.
* A handout for students of the basic structure and components of fiction (definitions)
* Extra paper/pencils for students if they neglected to bring materials

Demonstration: 40-55 minutes (if that time is not available, either do five sections in two periods OR cut down to four sections combining resolution and conclusion and use 30 second clips)

* Explain the exercise (2 min)
* Play first 1 minute clip, ask that they write keywords they think of (1 min)
* Stop the music
* Free write about introduction (5 min)
* Play the next clip, keywording (1 min)
* Stop the music
* Freewrite about rising action/conflict (5min)
* Play the next clip, keywording (1 min)
* Stop the music
* Freewrite about climax (5 min)
* Play the next clip, keywording (1 min)
* Stop the music
* Freewrite about declining action/resolution (5 min)
* Play the next clip, keywording (1 min)
* Stop the music
* Freewrite about conclusion (5 min)
* Discuss whether or not it was helpful to listen to music for freewriting (5 min)
* Ask for what words did they write for their keywords (5 min)
* Compare what was found: were there similar keywords, were there similar concepts, were they totally different. Conclude with that they just wrote the first draft of a fiction piece. Ask for opinions on the exercise. (10 min)

Indiana Standards

* Structure of a story

Goals/outcomes:

* Inspiring creativity for those who may be blocked
* Gaining an understanding and practice of story structure for short fiction
* Often music has been labeled the “universal language” and this is a small experiment to see if there is any truth behind that

Steps:

* Prior to this class exercise, the concepts and structure of fiction writing should be introduced. Including, but not limited to, Introduction, rising action, climax, resolution, antagonists/protagonists, conclusion
* At the beginning explain how the exercise will work: introducing the concept. Explain that we are going to listen to a clip of music, during that time write down key words, stop the music then let the class freewrite for 5 minutes about introduction. Then repeat with the 5 sections with different clips of music/sounds and continue with keywords followed by freewrite.
* At the end ask the class to share their keywords and compare what words/concepts came to their minds. Then, depending on the outcome, have discussion about how the students can be inspired to write and/or whether or not the music was helpful to use.